The DX-Tra
A Newsletter of the South Florida DX Association
May 2026

President – Jeff, WB3ISP Vice President – Al ,KJ3Q
Secretary – Rich, WB4EHG Treasurer – Gil, W1RG
Directors: Randy, N4QV; John, K2SHA; Bill, W2CQ; Mark, K2AU
Webmaster and Prize Chairman – Howard, W6HDG

May 6, 2026 Meeting Highlights



The May 6 meeting began with the induction of two new full members of the Club - Rodger, KM4NS (left) and Chris, K4CLK (right). The club welcomes seasoned DXers as well as newer HF operators wanting to learn more about the wonderful world of DX.

Membership info is here: https://sfdxa.com/membership-info/. You do not have to be able to attend meetings as all our meetings are on Zoom and we have many members from outside our immediate area. Come join us!

It is important to note that there is now only one official forum of the SFDXA- see https://groups.io/g/SFDXA. If you were previously on the QTH.com reflector, we welcome you to join us.

The Presentation: KP5/NP3VI Desecheo DXpedition





Nearly all of the South Florida DXers in attendance worked KP5/NP3VI. The team pulled off a 100% solar powered DXpedition of historical engineering and environmental significance, exceeding their goal of 100,000 Q's! Otis and EZ also spoke at the DX Dinner on May 15, 2026, in Dayton.

Congratulations to our Prize Winners!

At the end of the meeting, the Prize Chairman, Howard W6HDG, gave out the prizes to winners from the free door prize raffle. Leo (K4ITA) won the Grand Prize, a UR5CDX CT-599MB Solid Brass CW Paddle.

DX Happenings

Market Reef May 29 - June 6



Juha Kesalainen, OH1LEG, has announced his upcoming DXpedition to Market Reef (OJ0). As a seasoned operator, Juha's return to the lighthouse island is highly anticipated by the global DX community. He and Markus OH1MN plan to be active on multiple bands, offering a great opportunity for those still needing this rare entity for their DXCC. Be sure to watch the clusters. Here is a picture of Juha with his intrepid family





Juan Fernandez Island May 22-June 8, 2026



Felipe XQ7IR, shown here happily operating is joined by Moisés CE3VTZ & Manu CE3YMR activating both 3G0Z & XR0Z in the Juan Fernandez Islands

Working DX: Shouting at random people

By Howard Groveman W6HDG

I have 3 sons who never caught the ham radio bug. I was disappointed but otherwise it was fine with me. Until one of my kids sent a dagger through my heart by saying, “What is the point of ham radio? You just shout at random people!”



Our hobby is sometimes hard to get across to others.

Have you ever had a dinner party and for one reason or another got the opportunity to show off the ham shack to the uninitiated? I don’t know about you, but I rarely have a good experience doing this. Maybe I’m just a poor ham ambassador, but my friends develop a courteous but blank stare and inevitably start asking questions like, “So what exactly do you say to them?”

But rather than this turning into a Rodney Dangerfield joke (no respect….), I have to defend our hobby.

First off, there are in fact many “ridiculous” hobbies, at least on the surface. I don’t ridicule my friends who are into golfing, fishing, bird watching, or coin/stamp collecting. I don’t ask golfers, “So what do you do after hitting the little ball in the hole?” Golfers will also claim that theirs is a physical sport. But how can it be a sport when you burn less than 100 calories in 18 holes if you use a cart? Heck, I can burn more than that cranking up a tower. I think stamp or coin collectors get away with their activities because there is the possibility of financial gain – and that is always an easy one to get across to others. They don’t get asked, “so you put them in a little book and then what do you do?”

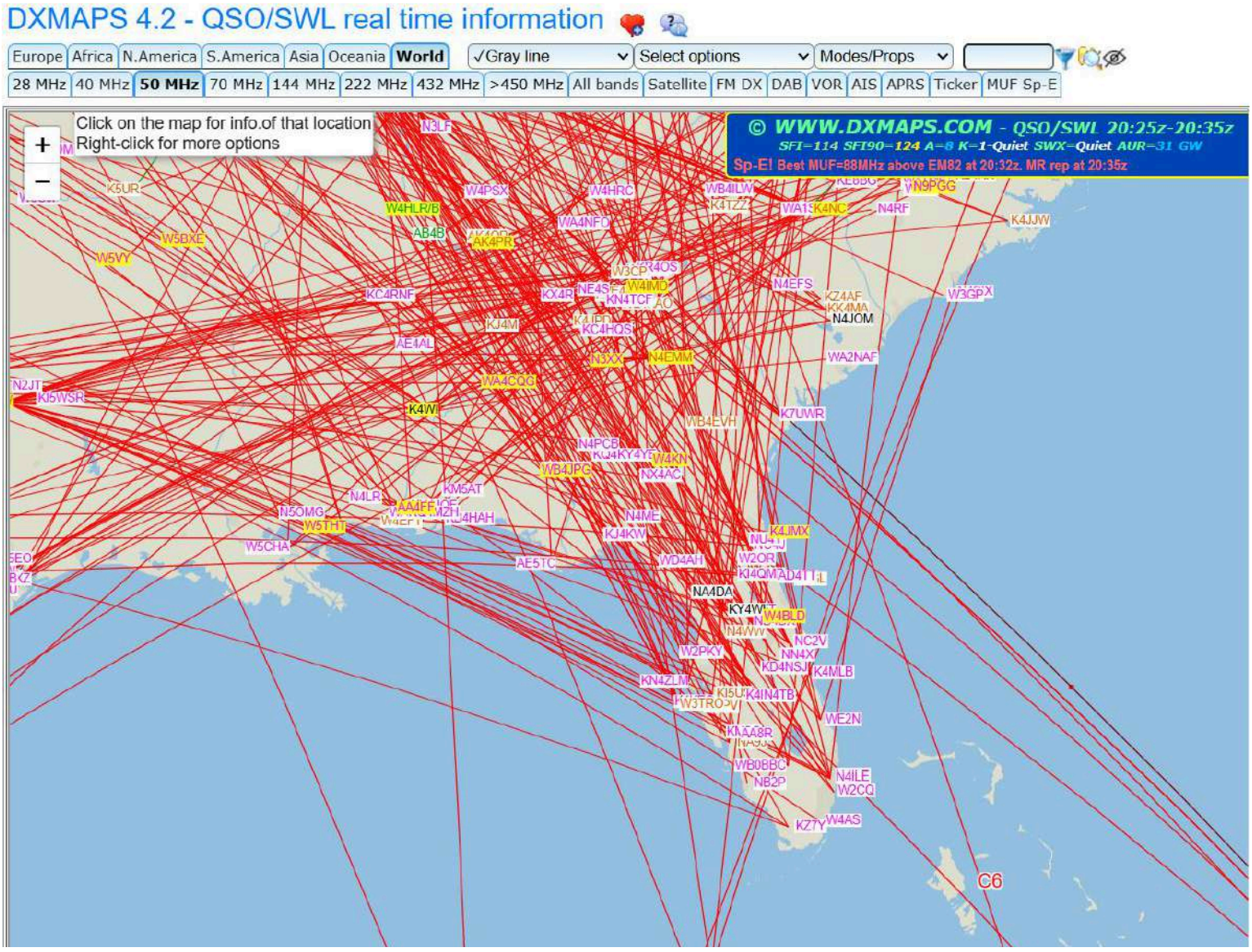
The fact that we get passionate about radios, antennas, ragchewing, elmering, contesting and rare DX is in fact hard to explain. Others may not get it, but the knowledge, skills, and challenges of our hobby create a special thrill that is hard to put into words. All I know is that we deeply love our hobby. Fortunately, we have the ham fraternity and our DX Club to understand and verify our magnificent obsession.

DX Computer Tools

by Howard W6HDG

Back in 2015 I gave a presentation to the San Diego DX Club about various computer apps and websites that made working DX easier and more productive. Things like DXMaps, DXWatch, PSK Reporter, Reverse Beacon Network, VOACAP, and of course DX Clusters were revolutionizing the hobby. Many of the club members did not even realize that DXMaps could send you an email when a band was open near your QTH (think how valuable that is to us 6M fans who don't have to sit on our thumbs waiting for the magic band to open). In fact, that is how I worked Desecheo KP5/NP3VI on 6 meters just three months ago).

A recent US opening notification I received from DXMaps is shown below. To sign up for these notification emails, go to https://www.dxmaps.com/spots/alerts.php



DX Computer Tools (con't)

In 2015, PSK Reporter was even more stupefying since it was like having a worldwide field strength meter. You could see propagation in real-time, see which bands were open and even compare the performance of two antennas by sending a CQ to the far reaches of the planet – and then seeing how strongly people spotted you within seconds. That is why allowing your WSJT-x and CWSkimmer to automatically send spots is such a good deed.

Remember that just 15 years earlier at the turn of the millennium, you had to be a telnet expert to use DX Clusters and many hams eschewed the Cluster as a form of cheating. In 2006, there was a debate on E-ham called “To Spot or Not to Spot” and a good portion of hams felt that DX spotting was the beginning of the end of our hobby. It's kind of like the FT8 mode doomsayers of recent years.

Twirling the dial was how REAL DXers searched the bands and they had the callouses on their thumb and index finger to prove it. Many ham clubs such as SFDXA used telephone calling circles and prearranged on-air frequencies to share the important news. It was fun and those are still some of the best memories in the ham community. Let’s face it, there were plenty of club members who had achieved No.1 Honor Roll before computers! So, I guess the point is that to this day there are no right or wrong answers on how one should operate and enjoy this great hobby of ours. It still takes good operators to make real DX contacts!



Web and computer/phone apps are merely the modern implementation of crowd sourcing and information sharing. Everyone knows that information is power. These applications don’t make the contact for you, but a phone app like HamAlert sure helps when trying to work a DXpedition. It is available for both iOS and Android.

Now let’s jump ahead to some more recent developments. There are now some sophisticated web-based apps that are proliferating. You may now be using or at least should probably know about these totally free web apps. I admire the smarts, innovation and dedication of their developers: DXLook.com, DXContest.org and most recently OpenHamclock.com. Open your favorite browser and try them out.

NEWS FLASH!!

At our July meeting our speaker will be **Chris Hetherington K0CJH**, the developer of **Open Ham Clock**! Our Club President, Jeff Dale WB3ISP met him at Dayton and invited him.

OpenHamClock.com and DXLook.com

I won't review Open Ham Clock here. Suffice it to say, that app is going places so don't miss Chris' talk! Here is a screenshot of OHC. I like the National Geographic map theme shown here.



DXLook.com

I asked Rodrigo Vazquez AK6FP/LU6ERV to give us a rundown on his program DXLook.com, so here is the article he kindly wrote for us. He was one of the first to amalgamate several tools into one easy to use map with overlays and useful panels. Take a look at the review of this app in the May 2026 edition of QST. I can see why QST chose to review this marvelous app.

DXLook: A Free, Ad-Free Propagation Map Built by Hams, For Hams
By Rodrigo Vazquez, AK6FP / LU6ERV

When I sit down at the radio, the first question I ask is: what's open, and where? DXLook (dxlook.com) is a free, ad-free, no-account-required web application that aggregates spot data from PSK Reporter, WSPRnet, RBN, DX Clusters, POTA, SOTA, and APRS. It overlays that data with real-time space weather, MUF zones, and VOACAP predictions on a single interactive world map.

What's actually different?
DXLook adds three key layers on top of PSK Reporter:

- **Aggregation across networks:** Merges digital, CW, and human spots under a single filter.
- **Composite views:** Overlays spot paths on MUF and VOACAP maps. *Reports + MUF* and *Reports + VOACAP* are where I spend most of my operating time.
- **Personalized conditions:** Factors in local time, latitude, and auroral activity to estimate conditions *at your station*.

DXLook: The Map Views

Reports — Where your signal is being heard right now. Switch the Callsign/Grid selector to Grid to see every CW and digital contact happening within your local area.

Summary — A worldwide grid-square heatmap of active propagation. Best for a quick "is the band alive?" check.

Cluster — Real-time DX Cluster spots from your immediate area, plotted at the midpoint of each path.

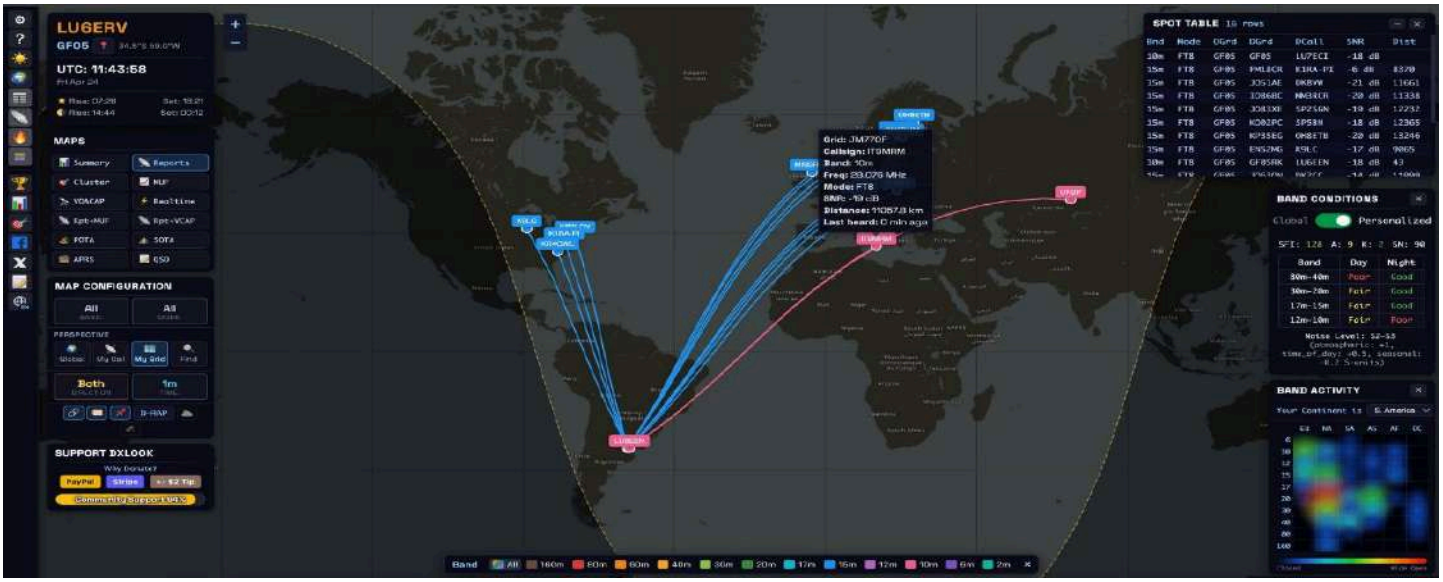
MUF & VOACAP — Colored zones showing ionospheric support and full propagation predictions customized to your grid.

Realtime — A live MQTT feed of FT8 spots as they happen. No refresh button needed.

Replay — *Editor Note: One of my absolute favorite features!* An animated 24-hour playback of band activity. You can watch openings build and fade as the grayline sweeps across the map. It's a genuinely useful tool for learning when your band tends to open to a target region.

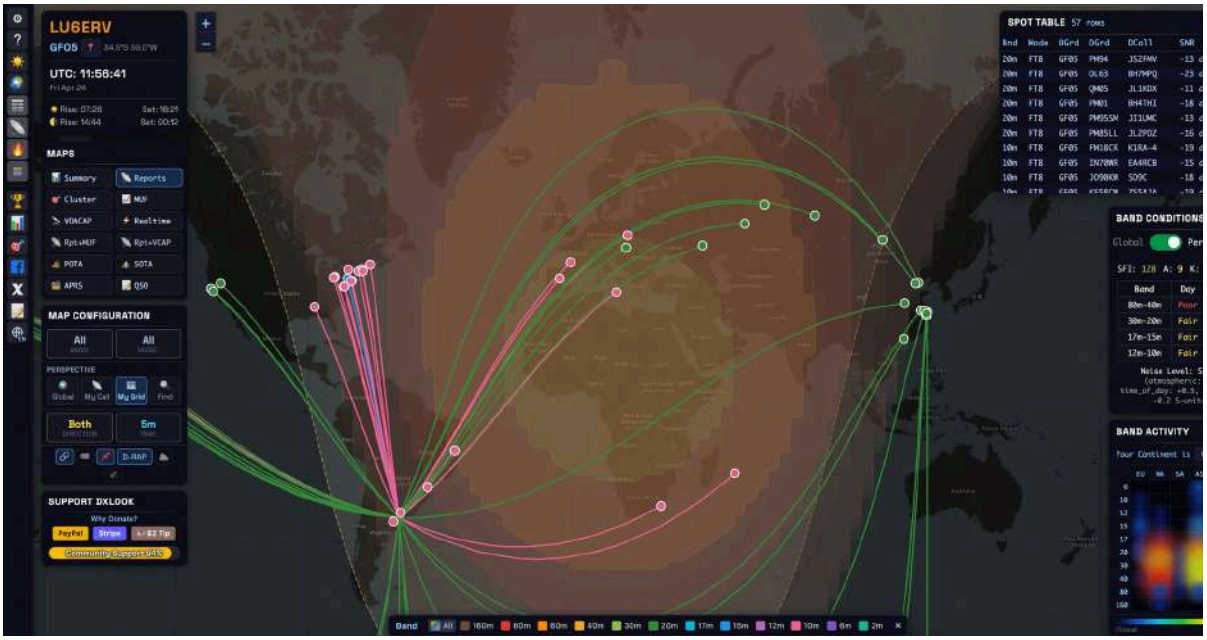
POTA / SOTA / APRS — Current activations worldwide and VHF propagation coverage based on digipeater hops.

QSO — Upload an ADIF file to plot your contacts. Highly useful for visualizing your antenna patterns or QRP range over time.

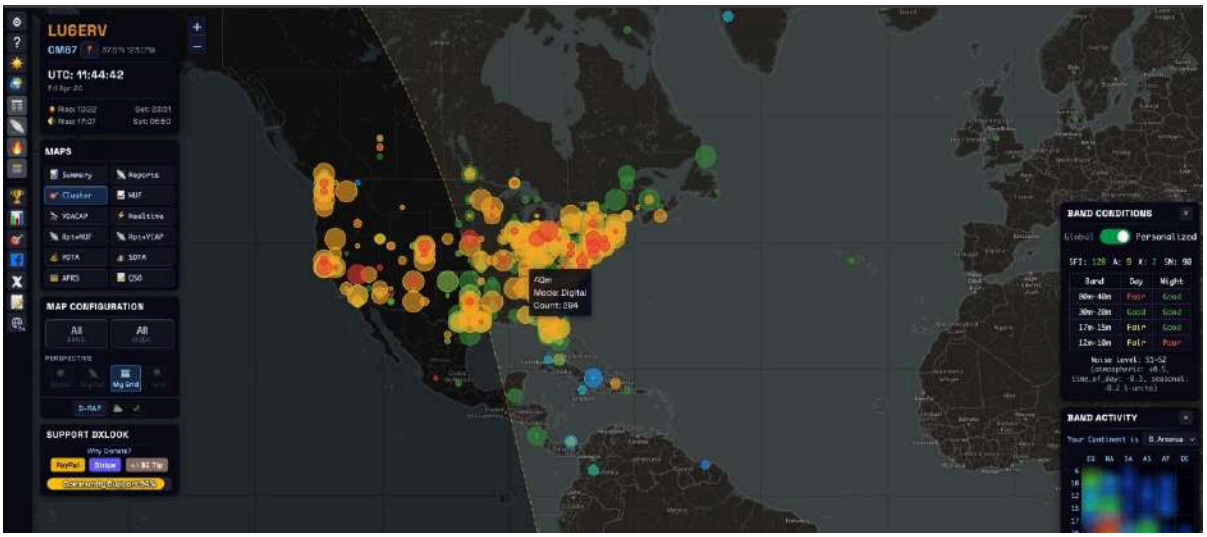




DXLook views





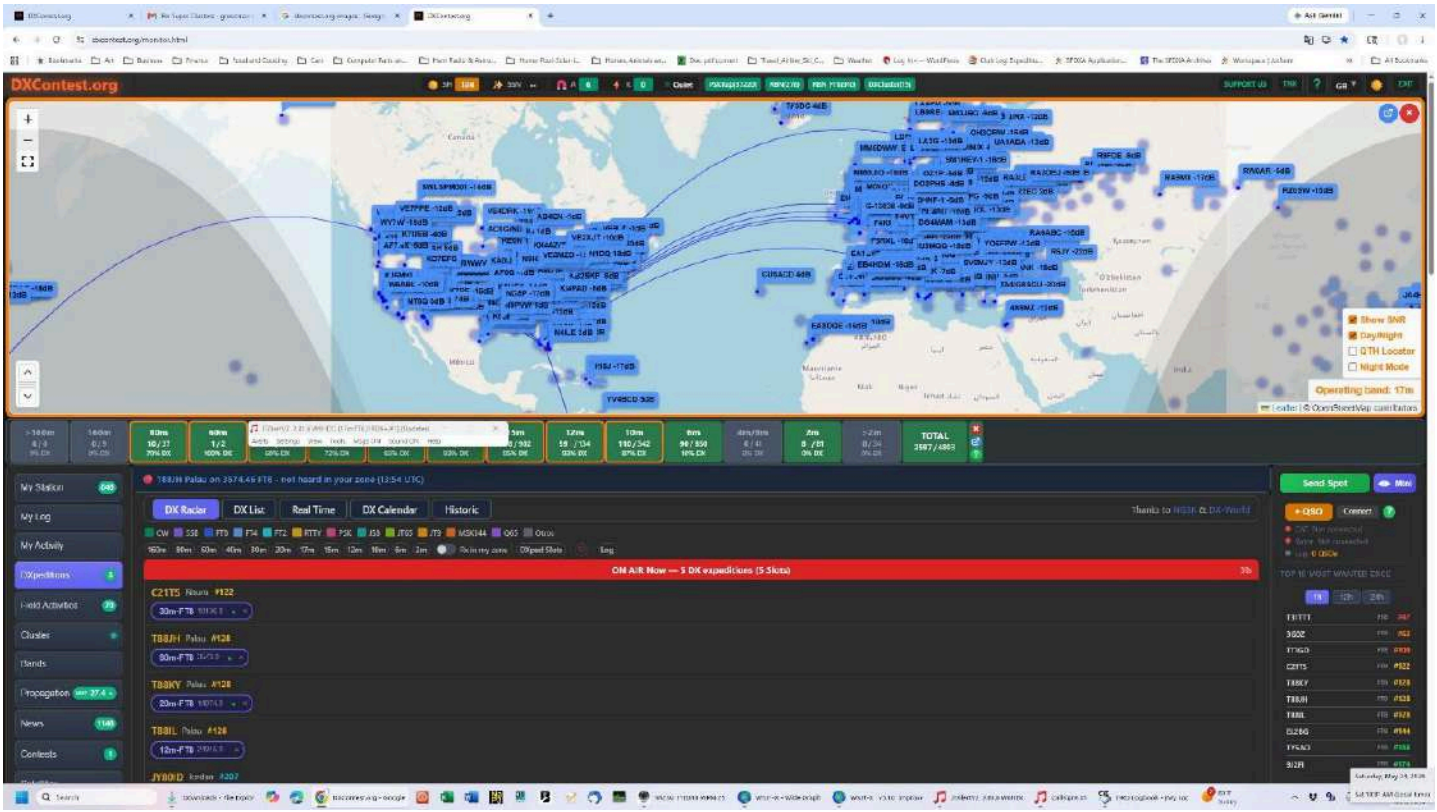


The platform also supports POTA/SOTA monitoring, satellite and EME operations, and provides deep propagation analysis tools like solar wind data and aurora tracking.

DXContest.org

I really enjoy this program. It was recommended to me by one of our newest Club members, Miguel Hernandez KK4CDK. Miguel is good friends with Pascual Salas EA5WU, the author of this program. Go to DXContest.org to try it out.

In a nutshell, this program has really matured in the past 8 months since release. DXContest.org is a web platform created on September 6, 2025, originally as a personal project by Pascual Salas, EA5WU. The initial goal was simple: to combine spots from the traditional DX Cluster, the Reverse Beacon Network, and PSKReporter into one centralized location and deliver them via telnet to a logging program. At that time, only Cluster and RBN spots were being received, which already represented a considerable load on the PC. Response times became slow and, at times, the system would freeze completely. PSKReporter was entirely outside the equation because it generates tens of thousands of spots per minute and is accessible only through the MQTT protocol, a format that conventional logging software cannot process. The solution was to build a dedicated server using the highly efficient RUST programming language capable of absorbing all these sources, processing them, filtering and deduplicating them, and delivering the information efficiently. What started as a personal tool quickly evolved into something much larger. On December 28, 2025, DXContest.org launched in beta. By May 2026, the project had matured significantly and most of the planned features had already been implemented. DXContest.org is free and ad-free. It can be used without registration, but registering unlocks additional tools and functionality.

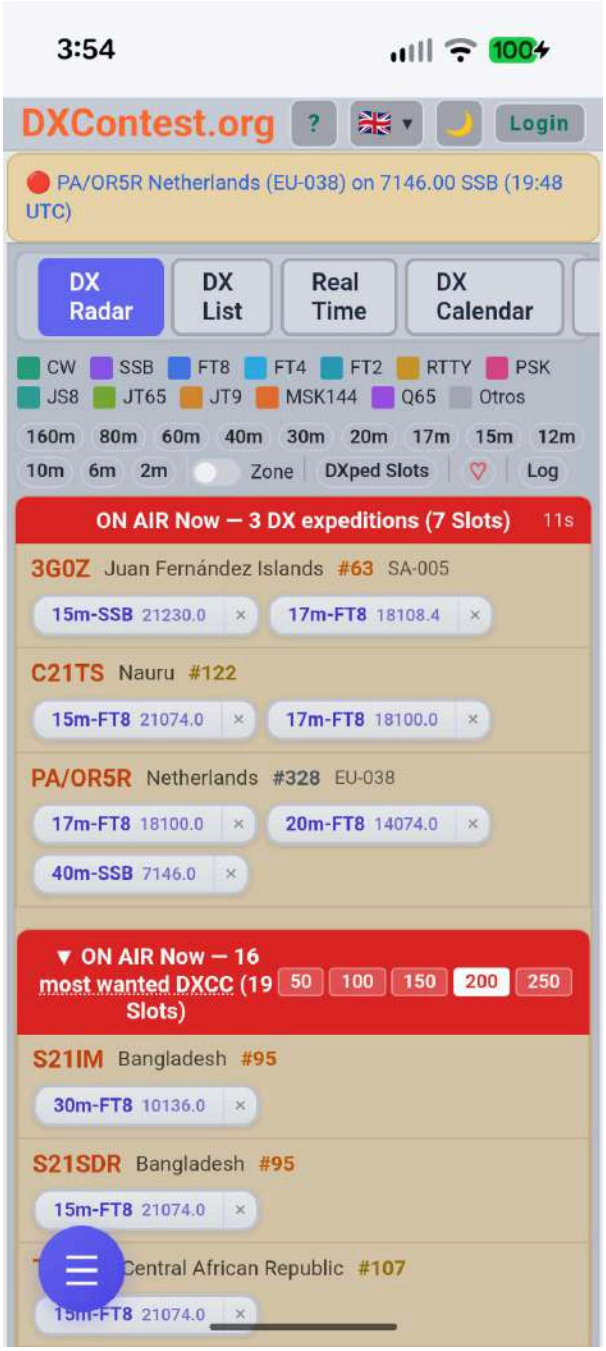


Real-Time Band and Propagation Visualization

A live map shows who is hearing you, signal strengths, real propagation conditions by band, active stations worldwide, reachable stations from your location, and available DX percentages.

DX Expedition Tracking & Awards

The platform tracks DX expeditions and the most wanted DXCC entities in real time. By integrating PSKReporter and RBN, spots often appear within 10 seconds of the first CQ. The Timeline tool displays active bands, modes, reception history, and operating status. Here is an image of an actual screen that helped me to work Juan Fernandez Island last week. This panel is worth its weight in gold.



Personal Log and Award Tracking
Uploading a personal log enables tracking for DXCC, WAZ, WPX, WAS, IOTA, and Satellite awards. It provides personal statistics, rankings, and advanced searches.

Propagation Tools
Includes solar wind data, X-ray monitoring, aurora tracking, beacon monitoring, ionosondes, and meteor scatter tracking.

Traditional Cluster Integration
Full access to traditional DX cluster functionality with advanced filtering and the ability to submit spots directly from the webpage.

Station Integration & Contesting

Station Integration
A companion bridge program allows CAT control, rotor control, and automatic log synchronization. Typical workflow: 1. Station appears. 2. Radio tunes. 3. Rotor points. 4. Log synchronizes.

Satellite and EME Support
Integrated tracking and automation for satellites and EME operation.

Contest & CW Features
Includes contest calendars, personalized filters, mobile notifications, and rival analysis. Dedicated CW support features spots, chat areas, QRS/QRQ sections, QRP station tracking, and CW club activity.

Telnet Services
Three telnet ports are available: Port 7300 (Human spots), Port 7310 (All sources with filtering), and Port 7320 (Contest-optimized).

VHF/UHF and Low Band Mapping
Real-time maps display VHF/UHF activity, low-band activity, and adaptive traffic windows.

Advanced Features & Monitoring

- **POTA, SOTA, and WWFF Monitoring**
- Real-time monitoring for:
- POTA activations
- SOTA activations
- WWFF operations
- **Personalization and Alerts**
- All tools are customizable. Mobile notifications include:
- DX expedition starts
- Band openings
- Contest alerts
- POTA/SOTA activity
- Special DX events

Summary
DXContest.org combines DX spotting, propagation analysis, contest tools, station automation, and award tracking into a single integrated platform. It is especially valuable for CW operators, digital mode operators, DXers, and contesters seeking real-time information and deep station integration.

Pascual Salas, EA5WU